

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 58 – February 27th – Mark 9:2-29

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Mark

Cranfield, CEB	<i>The Gospel According to Mark</i> (Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary), CUP, Cambridge, 4 th ed. 1972
France, RT	<i>The Gospel of Mark</i> (The New International Greek Testament Commentary), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2002
Guelich, Robert A	<i>Mark 1-8:26</i> (The Word Biblical Commentary, vol 34A), Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1989
Lane, William L	<i>The Gospel of Mark</i> , Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1974
Taylor, Vincent	<i>The Gospel According to St Mark</i> , Macmillan NT Commentaries, London, 1952

Verses 2-8

Cf. Mt 17:1-8; Lk 9:28-36. "Underlying Mark's telling of the story are clear echoes of the OT. This is explicit in the naming of Elijah and Moses as Jesus' companions in the vision. The 'transformation' of Jesus and the shining of his clothes may recall the shining of Moses' face in Ex 34:29-35, though Mark offers no verbal echoes or direct parallels to that account. More explicit are the repeated reminders of Moses' experiences at Sinai in Ex. 24. Moses took three named companions (though also seventy others) up onto the high mountain to meet with God (Ex. 24:1, 9), and there they had a vision of the divine glory (24:10); subsequently Moses went higher with only Joshua as a companion (24:13-14); cloud covered the mountain (24:15), and after 'six days' Moses went up into it (24:16); there God spoke to Moses (Ex. 25ff.); when Moses relayed God's words to the people, they promised to obey (24:3, 7). Mark's narrative does not reproduce exactly the Exodus story, but there are enough verbal and conceptual echoes to trigger thoughts of a new Sinai experience, and perhaps of Jesus as a new Moses (see on v.4). The fact that Elijah also met with God on the same mountain (1 Ki. 19:8-18) reinforces the link." France.

Verse 2

Καὶ μετὰ ἡμέρας ἕξ παραλαμβάνει ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τὸν Ἰάκωβον καὶ Ἰωάννην, καὶ ἀναφέρει αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν κατ' ἰδίαν μόνους. καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν, ἕξ six

"No other temporal statement in Mk outside of the Passion is so precise." Taylor. "Its effect is to link the ensuing story closely with the saying of 9:1, and to invite the reader to interpret the one in the light of the other." France.

παραλαμβάνω take
ἀναφέρω lead or take up
ὄρος, οὐς n mountain, hill
ὑψηλός, η, ον high

Cranfield says that while this mountain has from early times traditionally been identified as Tabor, that mountain is only 2000 ft high. He suggests that at more than 9000 ft, one of the spurs of Mt Hermon might be more appropriate. France thinks Mt Heron is more likely as "much closer to Caesarea Philippi and more nearly en route to Capernaum", but adds, "apart from the demands of the tourist industry, it seems neither important nor possible to determine just where the 'high mountain' was."

ἴδιος, α, ον one's own; κατ' ἰδίαν privately
μόνος, η, ον adj only, alone
μετεμορφώθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s
μεταμορφοομαι be changed in form

This verb occurs in the NT only here, the Mt. parallel and in Rom 12:2 and 2 Cor 3:18.

ἔμπροσθεν prep + gen before, in front of

Verse 3

καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο στίλβοντα λευκὰ λίαν οἷα γναφεὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐ δύναται οὕτως λευκᾶνα.

ἱματιον, ου n garment, clothing, robe
στίλβω glisten, dazzle, shine
λευκος, η, ον white, shining
λιαν adv exceedingly, greatly
οἷος, α, ον relative pronoun such as, of what kind
γναφευς, εως m one who bleaches (cloth)

οὕτως adv. thus, in this way

λευκᾶναι Verb, aor act infin λευκαινῶ
make white; bleach

Cf. Dan 7:9; Rev 3:5; 4:4; 7:9. Mt and Lk also mention Jesus' face shone. France comments, "Shining white clothing is a feature of accounts of the appearance of heavenly beings." Cf. Ps. 104:1-2.

Calvin says it was a "temporary exhibition of his glory" which would enable the disciples after the resurrection to realise that "even during the time that he emptied himself (Phil 2:7), he continued to retain his divinity entire, though it was concealed under the veil of his flesh."

Verse 4

καὶ ὄφθη αὐτοῖς Ἠλίας σὺν Μωϋσεῖ, καὶ ἦσαν συλλαλοῦντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ.

ὄφθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ὄραω see
Ἠλίας, ου m Elijah

France comments, "Of the many suggestions as to the significance of these two figures in Mark's narrative, probably the least valid is the traditional idea that they represent the law and the prophets. The fact that Elijah's name precedes Moses' would be very odd on this view; besides Elijah was not a writing prophet, and it is not in that capacity that he is discussed in vv. 11-13. What his presence triggers in the disciples' minds is the promise of his eschatological return (for which see below on vv. 11-13), and it is this which would probably have been uppermost in Jewish minds at that time (hence the popular tendency to identify Jesus as the new Elijah, 6:15; 8:28). Moses, too, featured in eschatological hopes, at least in the form of the promised 'prophet like Moses' of Dt. 18:15-19 who was the central figure in Samaritan messianic hope. The reappearance of these two great figures of the past thus symbolises the coming of the long-expected messianic age." France quotes Schweitzer, "This story has united two expectations which were alive in Judaism: the coming of the prophet of the end-time who is like Moses and the appearing of Elijah at the dawning of the end-time. It has declared to every Jew that the fulfilment of the history of Israel and of every hope for the glorious end-time have already begun with the coming of Jesus."

συλλαλεῶ speak with, talk with

Verse 5

καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ·
Ῥαββί, καλὸν ἐστὶν ἡμᾶς ὥδε εἶναι, καὶ
ποιήσωμεν τρεῖς σκηνάς, σοὶ μίαν καὶ Μωϋσεῖ
μίαν καὶ Ἠλίᾳ μίαν.

ἀποκριθεὶς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s
ἀποκρινομαι answer, reply, say

Here not 'reply' but 'respond'.

ῥαββι rabbi, teacher, master

"The vocative Ῥαββί, occurring here for the first time, means the same as διδάσκαλε (see on 4:38), but in this context, where Jesus has been revealed to be so much more than a human 'teacher', it seems even more inadequate. It appropriately conveys Peter's total failure to grasp the significance of the occasion, and fits well with the bizarre proposal to erect shelters on the mountain for each of the august 'teachers'." France.

καλός, η, ον good, right, proper, fine,
beautiful, precious

ὥδε adv here, in this place

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

ποιήσωμεν – hortatory subjunctive

τρεῖς, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three
σκηνῆ, ης f tent, temporary shelter,
tabernacle, dwelling place

"Peter was perhaps thinking of shelters made of intertwined branches or twigs such as were used in the Feast of Tabernacles... [though] it is possible that Peter's idea was to provide more permanent dwelling places." Cranfield.

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

Verse 6

οὐ γὰρ ᾔδει τί ἀποκριθῆ, ἔκφοβοι γὰρ
ἐγένοντο.

ᾔδει Verb, pluperf act indic, 3 s οἶδα know,
understand

ἀποκριθῆ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἀποκρινομαι
ἐκφοβός, ον frightened, terrified

ἐγένοντο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 pl
γίνομαι

Verse 7

καὶ ἐγένετο νεφέλη ἐπισκιάζουσα αὐτοῖς, καὶ
ἐγένετο φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης· Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ
υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ.

νεφέλη, ης f cloud

"The OT background is here of the utmost importance. Cf the following groups of passages: Ex 13:21f; 14:19f, 24; 40:36-38; Num 9:15-23; Ex 33:9f; 40:34f; Lev 16:2; Ex 16:10; 34:5; Ex 19:16; 24:15-18; Deut 5:22; Ps 78:14; 99:7; 105:39; 1 Kings 8:10f; 2 Chron 5:13f; Ezek 10:3f; Is 4:5... In the NT cf. Acts 1:9; Mk 13:26; 14:62; 1 Thess 4:17." Cranfield. France comments that "the echoes here are more specifically of the Sinai narratives, in the coming of a cloud on the mountain (Ex. 19:16; 24:15-16) and the voice of God speaking from the cloud (Ex 19:9; 24:16; 24:18-25:1; 34:5). Ex 19:9 offers a particularly interesting parallel, in that God's speaking out of the cloud to Moses was intended to ensure that the Israelites would thereafter heed his words; here, too, the voice is not so much a pronouncement to Jesus but is addressed to the disciples, and calls on them as a result to 'listen to him'. The manifestly divine means of communication authenticates the messenger."

ἐπισκιάζω overshadow, fall upon
ἀγαπητός, ἡ, ον beloved

Ὁν ἀκούετε αὐτόν Cf. Deut 18:15.
"When he enjoins us to hear him, he appoints him to be the supreme and only Teacher of his Church... he alone is appointed to be our Teacher, that in him all authority may dwell." Calvin. Jesus is the one in whom all the Law and the Prophets find their focus and fulfilment. France comments, "In the light of these words, Peter's proposal to put Elijah and Moses on a par with Jesus is seen to be even more out of place."

Verse 8

καὶ ἐξάπινα περιβλεψάμενοι οὐκέτι οὐδένα εἶδον ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν μόνον μεθ' ἑαυτῶν.

ἐξάπινα suddenly

"Mark's use of the rare word ἐξάπινα rather than his usual εὐθύς emphasises the dramatic change." France.

περιβλεψάμενοι Verb, aor midd ptc, m nom
pl περιβλεπομαι look around
οὐκέτι adv no longer, no more
οὐδεις, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing
εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὄρω see
ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

Verses 9-13

Cf. Mt 17:9-13.

Verse 9

Καὶ καταβαινόντων αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ ὄρους διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς ἵνα μηδενὶ ἅ εἶδον διηγήσωνται, εἰ μὴ ὅταν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆ.

καταβαινω come or go down, descend

ὄρος, ος n see v.2

διεστείλατο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 s

διαστελλομαι order, give strict orders

μηδεις, μηδεμα, μηδεν no one, nothing

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὄρω see

διηγήσωνται Verb, aor midd dep subj, 3 pl

διηγεομαι tell, relate

εἰ μὴ except

ὅταν when

νεκρος, α, ον dead

ἀναστῆ Verb, 2nd aor act subj, 3 s ἀνίστημι
rise

Cranfield points out that the disciples would not have understood what they had witnessed until after the Resurrection. France comments, "It is likely that the messianic and eschatological connotations of the vision would have sparked off the same sort of triumphalism and misdirected hopes which made the term ὁ Χριστός itself so hazardous. There is triumph to come, but before that there is to be rejection and death in Jerusalem. Only after that, and after ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆ, would it be possible for the vision to be shared without provoking the wrong sort of messianic enthusiasm. By that time, the open secret of Jesus' resurrection would already have made public something of what this private vision had told them about Jesus."

Verse 10

καὶ τὸν λόγον ἐκράτησαν πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς συζητοῦντες τί ἐστὶν τὸ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι.

κρατεω hold, hold fast, hold back

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς could be read either with καὶ τὸν λόγον ἐκράτησαν or with συζητοῦντες τί ἐστὶν τὸ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι.

συζητεω argue, discuss, question

ἀναστῆναι Verb, 2nd aor act infin ἀνίστημι

France comments "If the disciples understood Jesus to be talking of his own individual restoration to life after death within the normal course of history, they had good reason to be bewildered, as no clear precedent for such an idea can be found in extant literature of the period. They would more easily have understood 'resurrection' language less literally, probably as part of a more general eschatological hope rather than of his individual destiny." The central assertion of the NT that Jesus' bodily resurrection is the intrusion of the eschaton was, at this juncture, incomprehensible to the disciples.

Verse 11

καὶ ἐπηρώτων αὐτὸν λέγοντες· Ὅτι λέγουσιν οἱ γραμματεῖς ὅτι Ἠλίαν δεῖ ἐλθεῖν πρῶτον;
ἐπερωτῶ ask, interrogate, question

For the interrogative use of ὅτι, cf. 2:16.

γραμματεὺς, εὼς m scribe
δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary, must
ἐλθεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐρχομαι
πρῶτον adv. first

"The disciples' question arises naturally out of the appearance of Elijah on the mountain, and confirms the essentially eschatological implications of the incident; a reappearance of Elijah could mean only one thing, the coming of the 'great and terrible day of the LORD' (Mal 4:5). But Elijah's coming is to be 'before' that day comes; he is to come πρῶτον. (Note that neither Malachi nor the disciples' question here suggests that Elijah is to precede the *Messiah*; he is the herald of the 'day of the LORD'.) How then does his presence on the mountain fit in with the eschatological dimension of Jesus' ministry and the coming of the kingdom of God?" France.

Verse 12

ὁ δὲ ἔφη αὐτοῖς· Ἠλίας μὲν ἐλθὼν πρῶτον ἀποκαθιστάνει πάντα, καὶ πῶς γέγραπται ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἵνα πολλὰ πάθη καὶ ἐξουδενηθῇ;

ἔφη Verb, imperf act ind, 3s φημι say
μὲν here means, 'indeed', 'it is true'
ἀποκαθιστημι reestablish, restore

Cf. Mal 4:5f (LXX) and also Acts 3:21.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφῶ
write

πάθη Verb, aor act subj, 3 s πασχω suffer
ἐξουδενηθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s
ἐξουδενεω treat with contempt,
despise; reject

Cf Is 53:3 and Ps 118 (LXX 117):22 as quoted in Acts 4:11.

"Having admitted that the scribes are correct in this that they say, Jesus goes on to suggest that this 'restoring of all things' cannot mean just what on the surface it seems to mean, since scripture foretells for the Son of Man much suffering and humiliation." Cranfield.

Verse 13

ἀλλὰ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι καὶ Ἠλίας ἐλήλυθεν, καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ ὅσα ἤθελον, καθὼς γέγραπται ἐπ' αὐτόν.

ἐλήλυθεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s ἐρχομαι

"In the person of John the Baptist: cf. Mt 17:13; 11:14 and also Mk 1:2-6 parallels." Cranfield.

France comments, "What then was the significance of Elijah's appearance on the mountain, if Malachi's prophecy has already been fulfilled in John the Baptist? No direct connection is made, but the perfect tense of Ἠλίας ἐλήλυθεν directs the disciples' minds away from their natural assumption that what they have just witnessed was the fulfilment of the prophecy. That has already happened, and the vision on the mountain stands apart. Its significance is not the coming of Elijah as such, but in the appearance of Jesus as himself the focus of the fulfilment of OT hopes. The brief appearance of Moses and Elijah on the mountain testifies to *his* eschatological role, rather than giving to either of them a role of their own in the messianic events now unfolding."

ὅσος, ἡ, ὄν correlative pronoun, as much as,
how much, how far

θελω wish, will

France makes the point that such treatment is not predicted in Malachi. The reference, he suggests, is to the historical Elijah who was "driven by his faithfulness to God's commission into potentially fatal conflict with the royal house (1 Ki. 19:2-3, 10, 14). His bold confrontations with Ahab and Jezebel prefigure John's open challenge to Antipas and Herodias; the difference is that Herodias will succeed where Jezebel failed."

Verses 14-29

Cf. Mt 17:14-21; Lk 9:37-43a.

The vividness of this section suggests personal reminiscence by someone who came back down the mountain with Jesus.

"Apart from the two healings of the blind which 'frame' the journey to Jerusalem, this is the only other 'normal' miracle recorded in the gospel after Act One. There is of course also the cursing of the fig tree in chapter 11, but that is, as we shall see, a symbolic act of power quite unlike the miracles of Act One, in which Jesus' special ἐξουσία is deployed to meet human need... What distinguishes this narrative from the others is the previous failure of the disciples (vv. 14-18) and their subsequent question about why they had failed (vv. 28-29). It is this feature which gives the story a special appropriateness for Act Two... The lesson here, then, derives from a spectacular failure to fulfil the commission to cast out demons which has been given to the twelve in 3:15 and 6:7, and which they have already begun to undertake successfully (6:13). In the light of that earlier success, the failure has come as an unwelcome surprise to them, as well as to the watching crowd." France.

Verse 14

Καὶ ἐλθόντες πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς εἶδον ὄχλον πολὺν περὶ αὐτοὺς καὶ γραμματεῖς συζητοῦντας πρὸς αὐτούς.

"It seems likely that Mark wrote the plural ἐλθόντες ... εἶδον, continuing the account of the four men who went up the mountain, and that the verbs were altered to the singulars found in most MSS and versions in order to focus attention on Jesus, thus providing an antecedent for αὐτόν (v. 15) and the singular verbs which follow." France.

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὄραω see
ὄχλος, ον m crowd, multitude
γραμματεὺς, εὼς m scribe
συζητεῶ argue, discuss, question

"συζητεῶ (especially when followed by πρὸς) sometimes carries a hostile sense, 'dispute with', and here, where the grammatical subject of συζητούντας is specifically the γραμματεῖς, we are reminded of other occasions when hostile criticism has come not from the crowd but from a group of scribes (2:6, 16; 3:22; 7:1). The disciples' failure has given them further grounds for scepticism. The crowd, on the other hand, appears to be well disposed, at least in the welcome they gave to Jesus, perhaps already hoping for a more successful treatment of the boy's condition. Their leaving the disciples and running up to meet Jesus emphasises the distinction between the Master and his followers." France.

Verse 15

καὶ εὐθὺς πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος ἰδόντες αὐτὸν ἐξεθαμβήθησαν, καὶ προστρέχοντες ἤσπάζοντο αὐτόν.

ἰδόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl ὄραω
ἐξεθαμβήθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
ἐκθαμβεομαι be greatly surprised or alarmed

"Probably their astonishment was due to Jesus' unexpected and opportune arrival – the suggestion that it was because Jesus' face was still shining after the Transfiguration, like Moses' face (Ex. 34:29ff), is not very likely." Cranfield. France, also dismissing the idea of Jesus' face shining, says, "More likely Mark uses the verb rather extravagantly to denote the powerful impression which Jesus' personal presence by now created; 'this authority emanates from him even before he speaks or acts' (Schweitzer)." France.

προστρέχω run up to
ἄσπάζομαι greet, welcome

Verse 16

καὶ ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτούς· Τί συζητεῖτε πρὸς αὐτούς;

ἐπερωτῶ ask, interrogate, question

Cranfield thinks that the first αὐτούς refers to the crowd and the second to the disciples. France thinks that the first αὐτούς refers to the scribes, cf. v. 14.

Verse 17

καὶ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ εἷς ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου· Διδάσκαλε, ἤνεγκα τὸν υἱόν μου πρὸς σέ, ἔχοντα πνεῦμα ἄλαλον·

ἀπεκρίθη Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s
ἀποκρίνομαι answer, reply
εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μίας, ἑνος one
διδάσκαλος, ον m teacher
ἤνεγκα Verb, aor act indic, 1 s φέρω bring, lead

"It was his intention to bring his son to Jesus, but he had found the disciples without Jesus." Cranfield.

ἄλαλος, ον unable to speak, dumb

"It is surprising ... to find that the demon is described as πνεῦμα ἄλαλον. The same characteristic is picked up by Jesus' address to the demon in v. 25, το ἄλαλον και κωθον πνευμα. While there is nothing improbable in this combination of problems, it is interesting that neither Matthew nor Luke mentions a speech defect, and Mark's narrative focuses on the 'epileptic' symptoms rather than on the restoration of speech. The fact that the boy was also dumb seems to one of those 'irrelevant' narrative details which Mark so often preserves even though it is not where his interest centred." France.

Verse 18

καὶ ὅπου ἂν αὐτὸν καταλάβῃ ῥήσσει αὐτόν, καὶ ἀφρίζει καὶ τρίζει τοὺς ὀδόντας καὶ ξηραίνεται· καὶ εἶπα τοῖς μαθηταῖς σου ἵνα αὐτὸ ἐκβάλωσιν, καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσαν.

ὅπου adv. where, while; ὅπου ἂν or ὅπου ἔαν wherever, whenever
καταλάβῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s
καταλαμβάνω seize
ῥήσσει Verb, pres act indic, 3 s ῥήγνυμι and ῥησσω burst, break forth

Liddell and Scott suggest that this is not from ῥησσω/ῥηγνυμι but from ῥησσω, the Ionic form of ῥασσω or ῥαττω ('dash' or 'dash down').

ἀφρίζω foam at the mouth
τρίζω grind (of teeth)
ὀδους, ὀδοντος m tooth
ξηραίνω dry up; pass wither; become stiff

Trench recognises that this is an accurate description of epilepsy, but continues, "Not that we have here *only* an epileptic; but this was the ground on which the deeper spiritual evils of this child were super-induced." France warns against reading a modern medical diagnosis into the story. He comments, "In the circumstances it seems wiser to avoid the word 'epilepsy' here, and to interpret the story, as all three evangelists tell it, as one of exorcism. This may help to avoid two opposite and unhelpful extremes, on the one hand the reductionist assumption that all biblical accounts of demon possessions are merely primitive ways of describing malfunctions of the brain, and on the other hand the simplistic attribution of epilepsy as we know it to demonic causes."

εἶπα Verb, aor act indic, 1 s (less usual form)
λεγω

ἐκβάλλω throw out, expel, cast out
ἴσχυω be strong, be able, be sufficient

Cf. the use of ἴσχυω in 5:4.

Verse 19

ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς αὐτοῖς λέγει· ἼΩ γενεὰ ἄπιστος, ἕως πότε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔσομαι; ἕως πότε ἀνέξομαι ὑμῶν; φέρετε αὐτὸν πρὸς με

ὦ Ο!

γενεα, ας f generation, age
ἀπιστος, ον unfaithful, unbelieving

"Possibly not exclusively directed at the disciples, but surely it is to them specially that the words are addressed. It is their lack of faith that has been brought to light by their failure to cure the lad (cf. Mt 17:20)." Cranfield. France says of the disciples, "Their faithlessness is symptomatic of the wider human condition, as Jesus in his ministry so often encountered it, an unwillingness to take God at his word and a horizon limited to merely human possibilities."

πότε interrog adv. when? (ἕως ποτε how long?)

ἔσομαι Verb, fut indic, 1 s εἰμι
ἀνεχομαι endure, be patient with

Cf. Dt. 32:5. "Not so much of one longing to put off the evil of the flesh, as of a master complaining of the slowness and dullness of his scholars; 'Have I abode with you all this time, and have you profited so little by my teaching!'" Trench.

"But the remedy at this point is not further teaching for the crowd, or even for the disciples, but a visible demonstration of his own ἐξουσία and of the liberating power of God. With the command φέρετε αὐτὸν πρὸς με (which is just what the father had originally tried to do, v.17) the reader is put on the alert to see the disciples' failure overturned." France.

Verse 20

καὶ ἤνεγκαν αὐτὸν πρὸς αὐτόν. καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν τὸ πνεῦμα εὐθύς συνεσπάραξεν αὐτόν, καὶ πεσὼν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐκυλίετο ἀφρίζων.

ἤνεγκαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl φερω
ἰδὼν Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ὄραω
συσπαρασσω throw into convulsions, throw into a fit
πεσων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s πιπτω
fall, fall down

The subject changes from the demon to the boy.

γη, γης f earth
κυλιομαι roll about
ἀφρίζω foam at the mouth

Verse 21

καὶ ἐπηρώτησεν τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ· Πόσος χρόνος ἐστὶν ὡς τοῦτο γέγονεν αὐτῷ; ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· Ἐκ παιδιόθεν·

ποσος, η, ον how much(?)

χρονος, ου m time, period of time

ὡς here 'since'

γέγονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι

παιδιοθεν from childhood

Verse 22

καὶ πολλάκις καὶ εἰς πῦρ αὐτὸν ἔβαλεν καὶ εἰς ὕδατα ἵνα ἀπολέσῃ αὐτόν· ἀλλ' εἶ τι δύνη, βοήθησον ἡμῖν σπλαγχνισθεὶς ἐφ' ἡμᾶς.

πολλακις often, repeatedly, frequently

πυρ, ος n fire

ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

ἀπολλυμι destroy

δύνη Verb, fut midd dep indic, 2 s δυναμαι

Cf. the certainty of the leper in 1:40. "In the light of the disciples' recent failure the father is understandably cautious in asking for deliverance even by Jesus." France.

βοήθησον Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s βοηθεω help

σπλαγχνισθεις Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s σπλαγχνιζομαι take pity, have compassion

Cf. 6:34.

Verse 23

ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Τὸ εἰ δύνη, πάντα δυνατὰ τῷ πιστεύοντι.

The awkwardness of the expression has given rise to several textual variants including the inclusion of πιστευσσαι (TR). Metzger comments, "The extreme expression of the sentence has given trouble to the copyists. Not seeing that in το εἰ δυνη Jesus is repeating the words of the father in order to challenge them, a majority of witnesses have inserted πιστευσσαι, which has the effect of changing the subject of the verb 'can' from Jesus to the father."

Cranfield says of το εἰ δυνη "The το has the effect of making εἰ δυνη into a noun.

Translate: 'As to your "If you can"... Jesus quotes the father's words in order to challenge them." France suggests "If you can" indeed!"

δυνατος, η, ον possible

πιστεωω believe (in), have faith (in)

Cranfield suggests that the sense is, "There is nothing which is impossible for (i.e. in the view of) a man who has faith' (in other words, 'A man who has faith will not set any limit to what I (Jesus) (or perhaps God?) can do')."

France says similarly, "Faith is not a mechanical aid to the exorcist, but rather the attitude, or better the relationship with God, required of all concerned if the force of evil is to be defeated."

Verse 24

εὐθὺς κράζας ὁ πατήρ τοῦ παιδίου ἔλεγεν· Πιστεύω· βοήθει μου τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ.

κράζας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s κραζω

cry out

παιδιον, ου n child

Many MSS include μετα δακρυων before ἔλεγε(v). This "appears to be a Western storytelling embellishment." France.

πιστεωω believe (in), have faith (in)

βοηθεω see v.22

ἀπιστια, ας f unbelief

"He declares that he *believes*, and yet acknowledges himself to have *unbelief*. These two statements appear to contradict each other, but there is none of us that does not experience both of them in himself. As our *faith* is never perfect, it follows that we are partly *unbelievers*; but God forgives us, and exercises such forbearance towards us, as to reckon us believers on account of a small portion of faith." Calvin.

We might add that it is not the quantity of faith that is important but its object: there is no power in faith itself but only in the one in whom it rests. "The apparent *carte blanche* offered by πάντα δυνατὰ τῷ πιστεύοντι, as of many other NT assurances about prayer, may need to be tempered by pastoral advice, but it puts the emphasis where it should be, on the unlimited power of God in whom faith is placed; it rules out the suggestion that any force, certainly not the present demonic opponent, can be too much for God." France.

Verse 25

ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἐπισυντρέχει ὄχλος ἐπετίμησεν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἀκαθάρτῳ λέγων αὐτῷ· Τὸ ἄλαλον καὶ κωφὸν πνεῦμα, ἐγὼ ἐπιτάσσω σοι, ἔξελθε ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ μηκέτι εἰσέλθῃς εἰς αὐτόν.

ἰδων see v.20

ἐπισυντρεχω gather rapidly, close in

ἐπιτιμαω command, order

ἀκαθαρος, ον unclean

ἀλαλος, ον see v.17

κωφος, α, ον dumb, mute, deaf

ἐπιτασσω command, order

"The inclusion of the pronoun ἐγώ suggests that ἐγώ ἐπιτασσω σοι (unparalleled in the gospels in such a context) is not a redundant piece of 'padding', but draws attention to the person issuing the order: 'It is I who command it'. The demon may have been able to resist the lesser authority of the disciples, but has now met its match (cf. the recognition of Jesus and his authority by demons in 1:24; 3:11; 5:7, 10)." France.

μηκετι no longer

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in, come in

"Mt, 12:43-45 envisages the possibility of the return of an expelled demon, and the request of Legion's demons for an alternative home (5:12) indicates the problem of homelessness for an evicted demon, a problem which an exorcist had to take into account, hence this specific command not to return. For the father it is a much needed reassurance that a condition which has persisted ἐκ παιδιοθεν is now at an end." France.

Verse 26

καὶ κράξας καὶ πολλὰ σπαράξας ἐξῆλθεν· καὶ ἐγένετο ὡσεὶ νεκρὸς ὥστε τοὺς πολλοὺς λέγειν ὅτι ἀπέθανεν.

κράξας see v.24

σπαράξας Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s

σπαρασσω throw into convulsions

ὡσεὶ like, as

νεκρὸς, α, ον dead

ὥστε so that, with the result that

ἀπέθανεν Verb, aor act indic, 3s ἀποθνησκω die

Verse 27

ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ ἤγειρεν αὐτόν, καὶ ἀνέστη.

κρατεω hold, hold fast, sieze

χειρ, χειρὸς f hand

Cf. 1:31; 5:41-42.

ἐγειρω raise

ἀνέστη Verb, 2 aor act indic, 3 s ἀνίστημι

rise, stand up

Verse 28

καὶ εἰσελθόντος αὐτοῦ εἰς οἶκον οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ κατ' ἰδίαν ἐπηρώτων αὐτόν· Ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἠδυνήθημεν ἐκβαλεῖν αὐτό;

εἰσελθόντος Verb, aor act ptc, m gen s

εἰσερχομαι enter, go in

οἶκος, ον m house

ἴδιος, α, ον one's own; κατ' ἰδιαν privately

ἐπερωταω ask, question

ὅτι here = τί as in 2:16; 9:11

ἠδυνήθημεν Verb, aor pass dep indic, 1 pl

δυναμαι be able to, be capable of

ἐκβαλλω throw out, expel, cast out

Their puzzlement was caused perhaps by the fact that they had not exceeded their commission (Matt 10:8) and had on former occasions found the demons subject to them (Lk 10:17).

Verse 29

καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Τοῦτο τὸ γένος ἐν οὐδενὶ δύναται ἐξελεθεῖν εἰ μὴ ἐν προσευχῇ.

γενος, ους n family, race, sort, kind

προσευχη, ης f prayer

"After ἐν προσευχῇ most MSS add καὶ νηστεια, but the authorities supporting omission (κ* B k geo¹ Clement), though few, are important. Moreover, there was a tendency to add references to fasting, as is seen in Acts 10:30; 1 Cor 7:5 (though in both instances the MS evidence for inclusion is weaker than in Mk 9:29). We find also that this verse with the reference to fasting is added to the Byzantine and other authorities in the Mt parallel. A motive for addition was near at hand in the interest of the early Church in fasting, indicated in such passages as Acts 13:2; 14:23; *Didache* 7 and 8; Justin, *I Apol* 61. It is more difficult to think of a possible motive for omission... We conclude that 'and fasting' is not part of the original text, and that behind this addition lies a radical misunderstanding of Jesus' point. By 'prayer' he means not merely prayer as a pious exercise, but rather the sense of complete dependence on God which sincere prayer brings. But it was early misunderstood in the sense of a meritorious human pious activity, as though what the disciples needed was greater 'holiness' of an ascetic sort." Cranfield. France, however, having carefully considered the evidence and various arguments, concludes, "While the words might have been added to promote a current ascetic spirituality, they might equally have been omitted to discourage an overemphasis on fasting, or perhaps because a scribe felt them to be incompatible with the dismissal of fasting in 2:19. In the light of the massive external evidence for the inclusion of καὶ νηστεια, they should perhaps be retained, despite the confident A rating in UBS⁴ (unless it is believed that κ and B together can never be wrong!). Huck-Greeven retains."

"It would seem that the disciples had thought of the gift of 6:7 as given to them in such a way that they had henceforth the disposing of it; and therein had lain their lack of faith. They had to learn that God's power is not given to men in that way. It has rather ever to be asked for afresh (ἐν προσευξῆ) and received afresh. To trust God's power in the sense that we imagine that we have it in our control and at our disposal is tantamount to unbelief; for it is really to trust in ourselves instead of God." Cranfield. France comments similarly, "The disciples' problem ... has been a loss of the sense of dependence on Jesus' unique ἐξουσία which has undergirded their earlier exorcistic success. They have become blasé and thought of themselves as now the natural experts in such a case, and they must learn that in spiritual conflict there is no such automatic power. Their public humiliation has been a necessary part of their education to the principles of the kingdom of God."